

25. 8. 1913

i. 171 cmc 302

Sir

Your candid & very encouraging article on the difficulties of the
"Preacher" (Aug. 22nd) induces me to write before you the layman's
point of view. It seems to me that we have some reason to rejoice not
only in our clergy but in the quality of their preaching. Persons who
wander about the Continent in the summer months must
be impressed by the comparatively large & devout congregations that
assemble for the English Church Service, & very much so by the quality
of the preaching which, if not often brilliant, is almost always sincere
& edifying. All the same there is some sense of futility about
the lay, clerical mind. After a long life-time of listening to
sermons, the hearer has hardly a sense of progression or of accumu-
lation. It is probably the sincere modesty of the preachers which
makes them willing tolegate the sermon to the lower place in
the office of public worship. The labour laid on the ~~set~~ clergy seems
enormous to an outsider. The task of preparing & delivering 100 or
150 short disconnected essays in a year, say at least 100 in 10 yrs,
without the sense of progression is a firm task of accomplishing a
continuous work, must be very laborious & a little sterilizing. The
conclusion is, not that sermons are less better & more inspiring
but that they keep us at a remarkable ^{intellectual} spiritual level. At the same
time there is something wrong. The deliberate edifying of a house
of God should, no doubt, be the preacher's aim rather than the
piling up of a prodigious heap of unattached pebbles. A perception
of this fact must be deeply discouraging to most preachers, however
excellent their sermons. However fruitful & appreciative their
contributions.

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I have intended to call your article. I have referred to very
encouraging, but perhaps it is a symptom of "diminishing discontent" it
may have struck many of us that our Church has a unique
opportunity for nourishing a more complete Christianity than
the world has yet seen.

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with much of the
neural material
object lesson

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On a sermon a week on these ^a lines would still leave one
or two sermons to deal with the 2nd lesson, Epistle or Gospel,
none of which could be we do without.

And I suppose none of us only read the Lectern, with however
much pleasure & profit, what I am venturing to suggest is an
effort to envisage, realise, bring our spiritual insight to bear,
week by week, on a comparatively short passage of a Gospel
narrative. Because this is Utopian but then Utopia is the
only country ^{where} at which the traveller aims.

I write with very sincere diffidence, knowing that there may be
things in the way which I do not suspect; but perhaps a correspondence
in four columns will tend to show us the limitations & the
possibilities. Meantime I beg to remain in consideration
of these matters, truly & devoutly,

a faithful servant,

Radhakrishnan.